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ABSTRACT

The Deaf Adult Literacy program was created to meet the educational needs of deaf and hearing-impaired adult learners. The program was structured by an advisory committee of learners and teachers and was based on a model of bilingual education. All instruction was provided in American Sign Language (ASL) by teachers who were themselves deaf-native speakers of ASL. The curriculum emphasized basic academic skills, and its primary objective was to improve deaf adults' skills in using print and print media for purposes of communication and self-expression, gathering information, and accessing community and employment-related resources. During the program, 33 learners made significant progress in their ability to perform basic academic skills as measured by assessment instruments developed at Gallaudet University. Participation rates remained high throughout the program year. The participants produced a newsletter called "The Deaf Connection." The program has received endorsements and support by a broad coalition of community leaders, deaf persons, and providers of services to the adult deaf community. (This document includes a profile of the program, a working paper describing its instructional strategies and materials, a group evaluation, and a copy of the student newsletter.) (MN)

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ED 367 857

US Department of Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
Final Section 353 Project Report Summary
Fiscal Year 1992
(Program Year July 1, 1991 - June 30, 1992)

Title of Project: Deaf Literacy Program

Grant Period: 8/21/91 - 6/30/92

Grant Amount: $29,198.00

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Project Description:

This program was created to address the educational needs of deaf and hearing impaired learners. Instruction focused on improving deaf adults' skills in the use of print and print media in communication and self-expression, gathering information, and accessing community and employment related resources. Program structure and design stemmed from the idea that sign language is an independent language of the deaf, which carries an independent deaf culture. Therefore classes were conducted on a model of bilingual education; the teachers were Deaf-native speakers of American Sign Language, and provided all instruction in sign language. Instruction emphasized basic academic skills with a major emphasis placed on writing. Learners produced a newsletter of the writings called The Deaf Connection.

An advisory committee of learners and teachers helped structure the program.

Project Outcomes:

Thirty-three learners made significant progress in their ability to perform basic academic skills as measured by assessment instruments developed by the English Department at Gallaudet University. Learners also showed progress in improving their writing skills as evaluated by staff.

Participation rates remained high with learners achieving 2,930 contact hours of instruction. Learners expressed their personal satisfaction with the opportunities to achieve in areas such as personal gain and social interaction. Local staff received extensive training in working with deaf adults by interacting with staff from Gallaudet University.

The program has received endorsements and support by a broad coalition of community leaders, the deaf, and service providers to the adult deaf community.

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Conclusions:

The use of American Sign Language as the foundation for instruction, similar to a bi-lingual approach, is a useful strategy in working with deaf learners.

Dialogue journals were very successful as a means to develop and strengthen learners' ability in self-expression.

The high participation rate was achieved, in past, due to the positive and successful Deaf role models (teachers) who worked with the learners.

Description of Products:

Staff produced a "working paper" describing instructional strategies and materials used with their deaf and hearing impaired learners. Information on evaluating the program is included.

Products Available:

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Working Paper

Instructional Strategies and Materials
Used for the Deaf Literacy Program

The purpose of this working paper is to highlight some of the successful instructional strategies and printed materials that were used to assist Deaf adult learners in developing and maintaining literacy skills, particularly in understanding the English language. Since the pilot program kicked off so well back in Spring '91, the Deaf Literacy Program was expanded into a full-time operation during the 1991-1992 school year. During this year, there were 3 classes and a writing program. The program employed all Deaf and hearing-impaired professionals. Co-teaching has been very beneficial for all three classes. Learner-centered goals were established and reviewed in order to develop lesson plans and in finding materials to use.

The staff met twice to discuss this working paper. The following is what they found successful and useful in teaching Deaf adults. Keep in mind that we have all kinds of learners - foreign-born learners, very basic learners, and more developed learners. With this in mind, the teachers had to find materials that were most appropriate for each learner's skill levels. For the developed learners (these learners are classified as intermediate and advanced learners), dialogue journals were very useful. Some learners find it a psychologically satisfying way to express their feelings, and they sometimes would ask for guidance in their journals. Learners were instructed to write down anything in their dialogue journals. The rationale for this activity is to develop their ability in self-expression. Many learners desired to have maximum corrections as opposed to minimum corrections. They wanted to see correct grammar usage with their writings. Some learners had difficulty in finding things to say in their journals; therefore, they needed more prompting and direction on what to write. Even though the given idea to write down current events or everyday experiences was repeatedly explained, they were not confident or perhaps they lacked the experience in writing. However, they can demonstrate these spontaneous thoughts verbally in sign language. The class often had other literacy activities, and it was very time consuming for the teachers to read and respond everyone's dialogue journals.

The Structured Tasks for English Practice series has proved to be very successful with the developed learners. This series was developed and published by Gallaudet University. It is divided into 10 parts - Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, Infinitives and Gerunds, Prepositions, Articles, Conjunctions, and Complex Sentences. Most of the learners worked on nouns, verbs, adjectives, and infinitives and gerunds. Self-paced instruction is the biggest advantage

of this series which allows the learners to work independently.

The Deaf Heritage Student Textbook is another valuable tool. This high-interest reading includes vocabulary enrichment and reading comprehension questions. One activity stemming from this text was the teachers demonstrated the signs for the same spelled word although it had different meanings. For example, "run" is defined in several different ways and there are individual signs for those definitions. The teachers and the learners would invent a sign for a word if there isn't a legitimate sign. This would help them to remember the concept of what they had learned. The teachers had to revise the written questions in the text because many of the developed learners had a difficult time comprehending questions that require more thinking skills. The developed learners can easily grasp the understanding of literal questions, but not questions involving critical and interpreting thinking skills. The text also encouraged learners to express their opinions. This text is something the learners can relate to because of their background experiences. Reading the passages out loud was another activity. Following this activity learners were encouraged to ask questions if they didn't understand.

"News for You", a weekly newspaper, provided leisure reading for many developed learners. Most preferred to work on the crossword puzzles that are in each issue. Still other learners liked to read the sports section. This newspaper is not ideal for the very basic learners. However, they were interested in understanding the captions under the photos which led to further open discussion. The photos helped the learners to draw more context clues.

Playing games is one of the most exciting and challenging activity for all types of learners. They played Hangman, Pictionary, Survival Bingo (using survival words) and Family Feud or Deaf Feud. The former 3 games involve vocabulary comprehension and the latter game involves general knowledge or acquired knowledge questions.

Vocabulary Works is another vocabulary tool. In addition to learning new vocabulary, the learner was asked to read a paragraph and then to identify the main idea of the story. "Completing the Sentences" is one challenging activity where the learner must use context clues before writing down the correct word.

Other innovative strategies have proved to be benefical such as bringing in magazines, newspapers, or greeting cards to learn new words. Another challenging activity was the opportunity for learners to become teachers by reading, developing questions, and teaching a selected text. The teachers found this activity very successful with the

developed learners. One recommendation in the future is to use a videotape, which would enable learners ("student teachers") to review and evaluate their presentation.

Field trips to the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Task Force meetings and the Lobbying Workshop were also valuable learning experiences for many learners. Learners were given the opportunity to learn to write letters to their representatives and to speak up for their rights.

For the very basic learners, the teachers used flashcards with pictures and words, the New Oxford Picture Dictionary and accompanying workbook, TOE-HOLD books which are designed for Deaf learners by using a lot of visual stimuli and sign-language, and the First Word book. The New Picture Dictionary is a unique book, which contains scenarios such as the family tree, grocery store, doctor's office, etc.., and this text singlemindely point out the individual words corresponding to a given object. In its accompanying workbook, activities include "fill in the blanks", matching printed words with corresponding pictures, circling category words that go together and many other activities. The TOE-HOLD materials used a lot of illustrations such as signs and pictorial objects to help and cue the learner to grasp the meanings of very basic concepts. Activities include simple puzzles and "fill in the blanks" with the focus on noun-verb phrases. The First Word book contains independent living skills such as personal information, times and dates concepts, shopping and public places - school, post office, bank and transportation. Again, the activities were similar to the above activities. All of these materials were successful with the Deaf adult learners.

The writing program, which published the Deaf Connection three times during the school year, was held once a week. Only 4 learners were regulars in attending this class. It was impossible to produce a monthly newsletter. The writing program coordinator initially started off with some reading passages followed by comprehension questions. This did not prove to be successful. It took two classes to cover some basic instruction in writing a newsletter. The coordinator spent about 30/40 minutes with each learner with their individual assignments. It was advantageous to have a tutor available for extra help. The coordinator advised not to have more than 7 learners in the writing program and felt that two teachers would be needed for adequate instruction. It was strongly recommended that the writing program coordinator to be partially involved in other classes. She needed to know what was happening in the other classes (the learners in her writing program were also enrolled in a regular class at Brown).

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The establishment of the Deaf Connection newsletter took a great deal of time to learn the organization and being "editors". One suggestion was made to use the teacher's guide in teaching the mechanics of a newspaper. (No specified name of this teacher's guide could be found at this time.) This guide could give some direction to teaching skills required for a newsletter.

In the future, submitted writings to the writing program should give the learners from other classes some feedback of their writings. Many learners were curious to know how they did and why they were turned down.

The writing program requires a lot of skills, and one of them is to have a lot of background knowledge. There is a need to screen new learners to be enrolled in the future writing program with this exceptional knowledge.

Peer tutoring was attempted in this program, but it wasn't successful. They seemed not to have enough experience in "teaching" one another.

The writing program coordinator displayed her thesis with corrections on it to the class. She used this tactic to show everyone that we can still learn everyday. Learning has no limits especially when it comes to writing. It was suggested that the learners see the teachers' previous written work while they were or are in school to boost everyone's thinking that they are not alone in learning to write better.

The writing program focused mainly on the Deaf Connection newsletter. It was suggested in the future that other forms of writings should be taught so learners can develop skills and apply these skills to the newsletter. They include, but not limited to, fiction stories, reporting facts, sharing opinions, editorials, persuasive writings, etc... with one exception of writing a business letter. Teaching the mechanics of a business letter wasn't successful. The writing program coordinator thought it should be taught as a separate class.

DEAF ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM
Brown University

GROUP EVALUATION : 1991-1992

Teachers

Earnest I. Okwara, MS
Maria G. Okwara, MA

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The effectiveness of instruction and the ability to develop good English skills depends on a great extent, on the teaching methods we employ to teach them, the evaluation skills used to measure learning outcomes and the purpose and motivation they bring to the classroom. The adult class we taught was successful because we took all these into consideration. We knew that learners must have purpose and motivation for their learning, must be active in their learning, form good learning habits, be given opportunities to practice what they have learned, need favorable attitudes, and most important of all, must be given the opportunity to learn at their own rate. Below are the procedures we employed in the classroom to make sure our students improve their literacy skills. Also, we will make both Individual and Group evaluations of our students to see whether there were improvements or not in their learning.

METHODS EMPLOYED TO TEACH OUR STUDENTS

Reading Comprehension

Eventhough ,the text (deaf Heritage) came along with comprehension questions, our students were having a difficult time understanding it. Consequently, we decided to develop our own comprehension questions using the three levels of reading as a guide. We felt that the questions from the text ignored individual differences and tend to foster passive learning and create dependency. The comprehension questions we developed pay greater emphasis on individual differences, help to develop good reading skills, build up independence and promote problem solving. The use of comprehension questions in our opinion helped our students to understand better, the main idea of a story, follow sequence of events, follow directions and read for details. It clearly helped them to understand what the author was saying, what the author means, draw conclusions, make generalization and anticipate outcomes.

Vocabulary skills development

There is no doubt that hearing impaired adults have very poor word recognition skills. Since the ability to identify unknown words makes reading assignments more difficult, we paid special emphasis on vocabulary development by our adult learners. Consequently, we pretaught key vocabulary before each reading/asignment. Mostly, we use the definitional method of vocabulary development, namely showing the relationship between a word and the other known words, e.g. dictionary definitions, synomyns, antonyms, prefixes, suffixes, roots and classifications. We tried to use each word in different ways, since this made it easier to remember.

Wh-Question format

We used this format assist our students in their reading and writing skills. Research has shown that certain learners learn better when given the opportunity to formulate their own questions, rather than being made to answer them. We used the Deaf Heritage text to help our students develop their own questions, since it contains information that they had already been exposed to. This system helped most of our students who had not yet developed the concept of what a question was. The students were allowed to distribute their questions to fellow students, teach the class using the developed questions and correct answered ones. This system was beneficiary to the students since it gave them the experience to act as teachers, and practice what they had learned.

Language Experience Approach

We used our daily journal correspondence to practice this approach. This journal paid great emphasis on students' backgrounds and experiences. Mostly, they wrote about what happened the previous weekends, days, weeks, nights, etc. They first started with a single paragraph and gradually built up to two and more paragraphs. In the beginning, we did not make any changes to their writings, but as time went on and at their request, we started to make corrections on the journals. All in all, we felt that this was a good way to help improve writing skills, vocabulary skills and a greater understanding of written materials.

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EVALUATION OF STUDENTS' PROGRESS

We try to accurately summarize each student's progress throughout the instructional period. To do this, we focused on the instructional goals and objectives covered during the period, and the results of the diagnostic tests, pretest, posttest. rating scales. checklists, classroom performance and observations. The placement test we used was developed by the English Department at Gallaudet University. The Pretest and Posttest were developed by the Adult Basic education program at Gallaudet. Currently, there is no other evaluation tools that adequately measure learning by deaf adults, we thought they were the best available ones, because they were developed by people who are experts on deaf adults and their learning.

GROUP PERFORMANCE RESULT : A SUMMARY

In order for us to adequately measure our students' progress at the end of the instructional period, we gave them a pretest at the beginning and a posttest at the end of instruction. The result of their pretest showed that they were in the intermediate level. The results of both the pretest and posttest showed that we have **HETEROGENEOUS** students. This means that they have a wide range of previous achievements, though they were classified as being in the intermediate range. For example,in both tests (see table B), the highest earned scores were closer to the highest possible scores (72), yet the mean scores (34)/(43) were far below them. This could also mean that both tests were relatively complex for them.

Going through the result of both tests, we could see that there was a change in the performance of the students from the beginning of instruction to the end of the instructional period. For example, the average(mean) score went up from 34 in the pretest to 43 in the posttest. There were more higher scores in the posttest, than in the pretest and most of the students showed an improvement in their overall performance. Lower scores in the pretest also produced a mean that is lower than the median (39), while in the posttest, a few higher score raised the mean above the median(41). Also, there was a discrepancy in the overall range between the two tests. In the pretest, the range was 30, while on the posttest, the range went up to 40. This means that the highest earned score in the posttest was far greater than the lowest earned one. Also, this tells us that while there must have been very high scores in the posttest, this test also produced a far lower score than the pretest.

Table A: GROUP PERFORMANCE : TEST SCORES

Name of student	Pretest	Posttest
Acciaoilli, Lisa	51 (70.8%)	44 (61.1%)
Braznell, Andrea	27 (37.5%)	36 (50%)
Canulla, Hortencia	44 (61.1%)	64 (88.8%)
Coleman, Diane	54 (75%)	64 (88.8%)
Demaire, Barbara	29 (40.2%)	26 (36.1%)
Earnshaw, David	26 (36.1%)	28 (38.8%)
Fortier, Gary	53 (73.6%)	57 (79.1%)
Harrington, Diane	39 (54.1%)	41 (56.9%)
Harrison, Lee	24 (33.3%)	N/A
Martinez, Damaris	27 (37.5%)	24 (33.3%)
Veira, Natalie	43 (59.7%)	N/A

TABLE B: Test scores summary

	PRETEST	*POSTTEST*
Total Possible point	*72*	*72*
Highest earned score(s)	54 (75%)	64 (88.8%)
Mean (average) score	34	43
Median score	39	41
Mode	27	64
Range	30	40
Standard deviation (sd)	11	15

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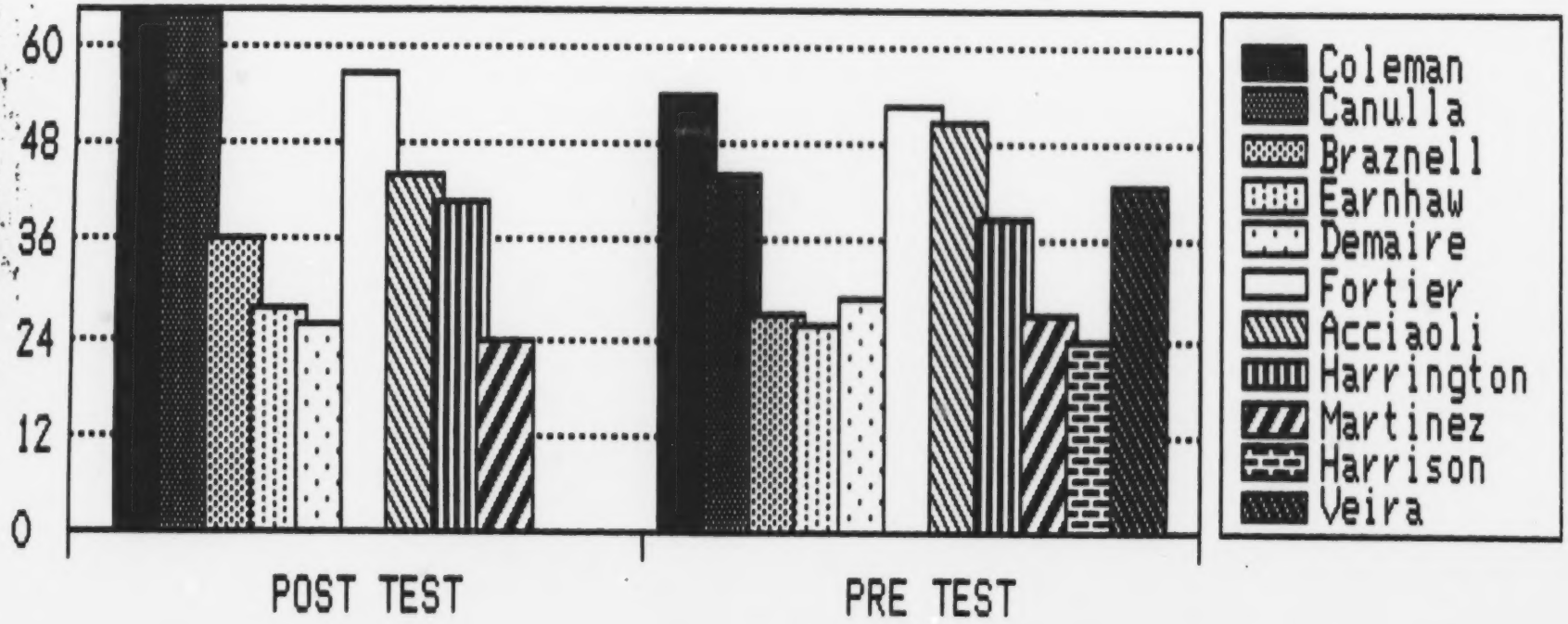
INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE IN THE POST AND PRE TESTS



TOTAL POSSIBLE POINT = 72

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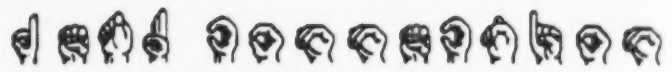

DEAF CONNECTION

The Rhode Island Deaf Literacy Program is funded by the Adult Academy. There are three English classes: one at Corliss Cooperative Center; another at the Ocean State Center for Independent Living; and the last at Brown University. A Writing Group also meets at Brown University. **Deaf Connection** is published by the Adult Academy as a free service to its learners. These pieces were written by the Deaf learners.

Untitled
By Natalie

Simon Carmel was born in Baltimore, Maryland. He became deaf when he got fever. His parents refused to let him uses sign language because it looked dumb. Anyway, when Simon entered Gallaudet College. He did not know how to sign. He had to learn sign language. His parents realized that Simon might marry a deaf woman and have deaf children. They had to learn sign language for their family. Simon is interested in international sign language and deaf folklore and culture. Dr. Simon is assistant professor and teaches Deaf Heritage and Cultural anthropology at National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

How to become a sweetheart?
By Gary

If you were a palm.
If I were a pear.
She tried to touch my hand so I felt nervous.
She was too soft to touch her hand to my hand so I felt too tight.
She wanted to hug me and my heart beat
so quickly.
She held me so gently and I felt so warm.
We finally fell in love warmly and gently.
Then we became sweetheart.

• • •

"Franklin Boy" By Charles

The boy name is Franklin. He has one horse. Franklin put the saddle on the hourse's back and he sit on the horse's back. Franklin ride the horse run very fast. However he like the horse better than the donkey, because the donkey run very slow. So Franklin saw the bird drop the worm down to and hit Franklin's face. And he yell at the bird make him felt angry. The horse run and stop cause it scare, then he fall over the horse's head. Franklin hit and splash all over the muds. The bird is laughting and still laught at Franklin. Then the bird fly away. The End!

"Love Story" By Diane

On summertime, a woman named Alice who was so beatiful and smart girl. She met a very handsome boy at school. His name was Joe. Alice thought she liked him and Joe saw Alice and asked her for a date and she was so thrilled and nervous and she said to him, Yes! Joe was so happy. Joe took Alice to movie and watched it but Joe took Alice's hands so she was so nervous for the first time and Joe kissed her and they became sweethearts. Next few months, Joe asked Alice to marry me and Alice said yes and Joe was very happy. After they planned to marry soon but Alice went to the doctor for a checkup. A few days later, the doctor called Alice and wanted to see her right away and she said okay so she went to the doctor's office. The doctor told Alice that, please listened to me, he found out that she had a cancer. Alice was so scared and disappointed. When Alice called Joe he came over her house and explained to him and he was so scared and and cried that he loves Alice very much in the world. Few months later, Alice did not feel well and she went to the hospital for chemotherapy and remained there few months and she died. Joe was so depressed and missed Alice so much. Joe never found another girl like Alice.

Untitled By Hortencia

I am deaf and moved here from California. Paula brought her friend, Paul, to my house. I fall in love with him. Later we got married and had a lovely son, Joshua. Joshua is hard of hearing. He goes to Rhode Island School for the Deaf for parent program on Mondays and Wendesdays. It's help parents of deaf children to understand better. It is very important to deaf children. they can be smarter. I am responible to teach him right things and good life.

A winter season was coming!
By Gary

An autumn season was over.
Look at the leafless trees.
The leafless trees are dull and bare.
The snow was coming and attached with branches.
The snow looked white and pretty.
Look at the icicles under the branches.
The icicles dropped fewer water.
At the night, the icicles and snow became frozen.
On the bright moon, Look bright and white snow on the ground.
That is a symbol of winter season.

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